

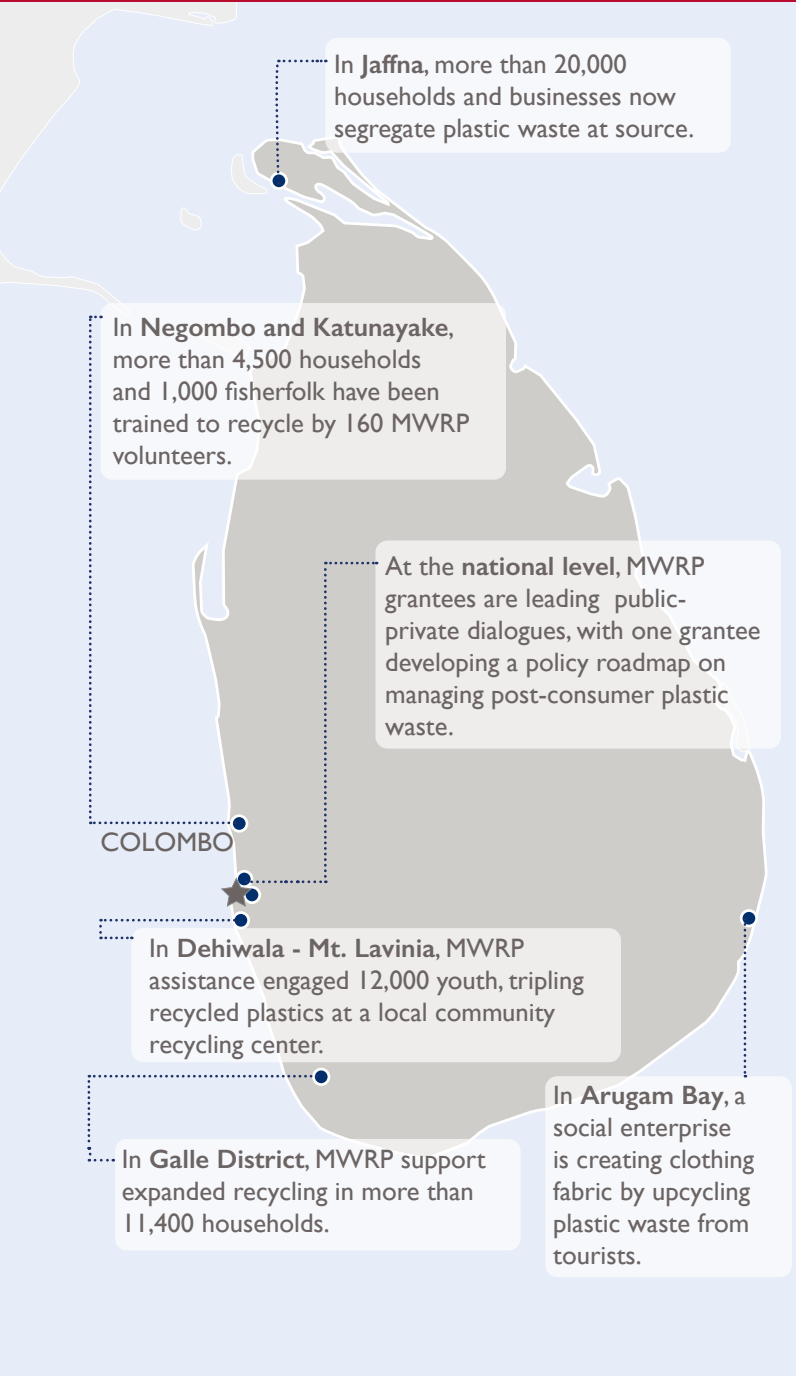


USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



PARTNERING WITH CITIES TO REDUCE OCEAN PLASTICS

THE MUNICIPAL WASTE RECYCLING PROGRAM | SRI LANKA



THE CHALLENGE

Each year, eight million metric tons of plastic pour into the world's ocean. This global crisis is exacerbated by poor waste management systems of rapidly urbanizing coastal cities in developing countries. Recent scientific research shows Sri Lanka contributes up to 640,000 metric tons of plastic waste to oceans annually, making it the world's fifth largest polluter by total mass of mismanaged plastic debris.¹

Sri Lanka has experienced renewed economic growth since the end of the country's long civil war in 2009. This development has put a strain on the country's solid waste management system. The mismanagement of the increasing amounts of solid waste and an insufficient number of disposal sites have led to a growing volume of plastic waste discarded near or in the waterways, ultimately finding its way into the ocean.

THE U.S. GOVERNMENT APPROACH

The 2018 Save our Seas Act encourages U.S. government agencies to work with countries that discharge the largest amounts of solid waste into our oceans. Stopping pollution at the source while reducing plastic waste pollution is the most effective way to address this challenge.

The Municipal Waste Recycling Program (MWRP), a five-year (2016-2021) USAID-funded initiative, works in Vietnam, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, and Indonesia to reduce and prevent land-based sources of ocean plastic pollution. MWRP grants and technical assistance help local organizations improve solid waste management (SWM) and increase waste recycling.

1. Jambeck, J.R. et al. (2015). Plastic waste inputs from land into the ocean. *Science* 347(6223), 768-771. doi: 10.1126/science.1260352

IMPACTS OF THE MUNICIPAL WASTE RECYCLING PROGRAM IN SRI LANKA

With a USD 1.2 million USAID investment, six MWRP grantees support SWM to create clean and healthy communities for more than **738,000 residents** in nine cities across Sri Lanka, ultimately contributing to cleaner oceans worldwide. MWRP and its grantees reduce ocean plastics by:

Expanding the Recycling Sector: From major cities to small towns, grantees are partnering with local businesses, national chains, and entrepreneurs to increase recycling and incorporate sustainable waste reduction and management practices into business operations. In Dehiwala-Mt. Lavinia, a rapidly growing area with more than 250,000 people near the capital of Colombo, an MWRP grantee helped formalize the enterprises of **27 independent waste collectors** and provided technical assistance to **23 private recyclers** so they could generate more income through the sale of recyclable plastic materials. In the cities of Negombo and Katunayake on the west coast, another MWRP grantee provided technical assistance to local authorities and to the two largest local recycling businesses, resulting in expanded operations and the creation of **34 new jobs**. The same MWRP grantee worked with 14 supermarkets, including branches of the large national chain Keells Super, educating more than **3,000 customers and staff** about the use of reusable shopping bags. This led to a **30% drop in the use of plastic shopping bags** in these supermarkets.

Building Healthier, More Vibrant Communities: In the Galle District, an MWRP grantee supported **25 schools and 11,500 youth** to reduce plastic waste and recycle by minimizing plastic bag use and introducing solid waste segregation. In the same region, the Public Health Inspector's Office attributed a **decline in dengue fever cases** (close to 80% in some neighborhoods) from 2017 to 2018 to the sharp drop in improperly disposed plastic waste that reduced breeding grounds for mosquitoes. In Jaffna, an MWRP grantee **trained more than 20,000 households and businesses**, during beach and neighborhood cleanups, to segregate waste at source and to recycle plastic waste.

Promoting Scalable Private Sector Waste Management Models: An MWRP grantee is strengthening the ongoing national dialogue between the government and the private sector to **implement post-consumer plastic management strategies**. The Ministry of Environment and Wildlife Resources and corporations, such as Coca-Cola Beverages Sri Lanka, are working with the MWRP grantee to produce a road map to guide government regulations applicable to the



PHOTO: USAID URBAN

With USAID support, local organizations are increasingly recycling plastic waste. Plastic waste is collected, baled, and sent to a private firm to be recycled into polyester yarn used for making clothes.

"[P]rior to the training I was involved in burning all the garbage without segregating them... Now, re-usable products such as polythene bags are sent to the recycling center... Before the end of this project I hope to make a small change in the attitude towards SWM in my village!"

- Ms. Vishnuka Sivananadan,
MWRP training of trainers participant

plastics and packaging industries.

Another MWRP grantee reduces ocean plastic waste through law review and reform, **improvements in law enforcement**, and legal training. The legal training focuses on improving the existing legal framework for SWM and ocean plastics, including micro-plastics. In Arugam Bay, an MWRP grantee is creating a social enterprise model for tourist destinations – based on the business of sustainable plastics collection and the **export of upcycled products**. The grantee has collected 10.3 metric tons of PET bottles from hotels and restaurants and repurposed them into textile fabric through a process of cleaning, shredding, and melting the bottles into a material that can be spun into thread.

Turning Public Plastics Awareness into Action: An MWRP grantee in Arugam Bay created a plastic recycling demonstration and learning center targeting **5,000 tourists**. The center teaches youths and tourists about plastic recycling and upcycling. Across MWRP grantees in Sri Lanka, more than 50,000 households and establishments have redirected more than **770 metric tons of plastic waste** from disposal in the ocean.